Numb. 56.

The Female Tatler.

Written by a Society of Ladies.

—— *Obſequium amicos, veritas odium parit.*

From **Friday** November 11, to **Monday** November 14, 1709.

Lucinda's Day.

From my Cloſet, November *the 12th.*

CHLOE and *Celia,* two young Gentlewomen that are Couſins, of whoſe Affairs I knew more than either of them imagined, coming to ſee me this Afternoon, complain'd, That the *Female Tatler* had left off taking notice of the Scandal that was ſent her; they talk of dulneſs, Hackney writing, Salary, and ſeveral other things that diſpleas'd me; for which having a mind to be revenged on them, I told them, that I had received two true Stories of Scandal upon two Ladies, whom I knew not, that if they wou'd give themſelves the trouble of hearing them, I ſhould be glad of their Opinions, whether they were worth publiſhing or not; they anſwer'd, by all means, nothing of Scandal could come amiſs to them: So whilſt my Maid ſet the Tea-Table; I unlock'd my Scrutore, and took out a Sheet of Paper writ in a ſmall Character. We had hardly Drank two Diſhes each, but I ſaw that the Ladies were impatient to hear what I had offer'd, and accordingly looking on my Paper under pretence of reading it, I began the firſt Story.

Having deſcribed a certain Merchant by his Size and Complexion, the place where he lived, and the Commodity he dealt in, ſo exactly, that any body who was acquainted with him, might know it was *Chloe*'s Father I meant, I continued thus: This Gentleman, ſaid I, has a ſprightly young Lady to his Daughter, that takes abundance of Care to appear unaffected and gay, behaves herſelf with a more than ordinary Freedom in all manner of Company, and yet pretends to be ſtrictly Chaſte, and is proud of her Conduct. She is very Cenſorious upon all young People that are not of the ſame Temper, calls Modeſty Slyneſs, and hardly allows any body to be Virtuous, that is more reſerv'd than herſelf. They had a Gentleman that Boarded with them, whom the Daughter treated very familiarly, play'd at Romps with him, admitted him into her Chamber, and ſometimes ſcrupled not to enter his. The Father had a good Opinion of his Daughter, the Mother doted on her, and neither of them ſuſpecting her Virtue; ſhe was never controul'd in her Actions: One Morning ſhe complain'd of having loſt one of her Garters, ſearch was made throughout her Chamber, the Mother look'd in every corner of her own, the Maid did the ſame in the Parlor and Dining-Room, but no Garter was found. Some Two Hours after the Maid being come down from making the Beds, held out the Garter to her young Miſtreſs, where ſhe ſat with her Father and Mother, and ſmiled; the Lady ſnatching it away, ask'd her, where ſhe had it; but being anſwer'd in Mr L——'s Bed, which was the Centleman that Boarded with them, ſhe diſcover'd ſo much Aſtoniſhment, as well as the Gentleman himſelf, who likewiſe happen'd to be preſent, that it was eaſily ſeen that whether the Garter was found in his Bed or not, the Owner of it had certainly been there.

I had obſerv'd, that whilſt, as they thought, I was reading this Story, *Celia* all along had been wonderfully pleaſed, and continually Sniggering and Nodding at her Couſin, who for her part look'd very Grave, and ſeem'd as uneaſy as if ſhe had ſat upon Nettles, and when I had finiſh'd, as the one call'd it, a ſilly Story, and wonder'd *Celia* could laugh at any thing ſo dull and inſipid, ſo the other extolling it as extravagantly, ſaid, it was the beſt ſhe ever heard, and earneſtly preſſed me to go on with the ſecond. I wanted not much entreaty; for as theſe two Stories, which I had ready for 'em, the firſt touch'd *Chloe* to the quick, ſo this was to be as home upon her Couſin, both being litterally true. *Celia* was the Reverſe of *Chloe*, and ſeem'd as affectedly Cautious as the other was over free. She pretended to have a great Averſion to Men, was very Circumſpect in their Company, and thought ill of all Women that were not equally Coy, and retir'd as herſelf. When I made an end of *Celia*'s Character, and been particular enough in the Deſcription of her Perſon and Circumſtances to make her known, I ſaw that her Mirth was over, and all her good Humour vaniſh'd; but on the other ſide *Chloe* by degrees recovering from her dumps, aſſum'd a merrier Countenance, and at laſt ſeem'd to feel the ſame Satisfaction which her Couſin had expreſſed before. Looking ſtill ſtedfaſtly upon my Paper, I went on in this manner: This reſerv'd Lady, ſaid I, perſwaded by her Mother and other Relations, relented at laſt, and vouchſafed a more favourable hearing to one of her Suitors, whom we ſhall call *Lyſander*, than hitherto ſhe had done to any; and a Match was in great forwardneſs, when the Gallant's Father, who liv'd a Hundred Miles off, falls Sick, and in Poſt haſte ſends for his Son, who willing to obey his Father, took a ſhort leave of his Miſtreſs, and went down with a promiſe of a ſpeedy return. The Father after two Months Illneſs Dies, and leaves his Son a large, but incumbred Eſtate, the troubles of which detaining *Lyſander* longer than willingly he would have ſtaid, almoſt half a Year elapſed before he came back from *London*, where he was ſooner arrived, but receiv'd the unwelcome News of his Miſtreſs's being very Ill, and likely to die: He heard, that ſhe was gone Ten Miles off, to a little Hamlet in *Eſſex*, where her Mother had a ſmall Farm of Twenty Pound *per Annum*, and that her Diſtemper was a kind of Dropſy, call'd the Tympany. He made what haſte he could to ſee her, but coming there, ſhe happen'd to be ſo very bad, that he could not be admitted; but when *Lyſander* would

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not be denied by the Servant that ſpoke to him, and made ſeveral Inſtances to ſee her, comes down to him at laſt an Elderly Matron, who by telling him that the Lady had been light-headed for ſome Days, and was that Minute dropt into a Slumber, and giving him a ſpecious account of the whole State of her Illneſs, perſwaded him, tho' much ado, to forbear his Viſit, and go as he came. After this, *Lyſander* expected every hour to hear ſhe was dead; but the third Day was joyfully revived with the unhop'd for Tidings of his Miſtreſs's being on the mending hand. She now daily recovers apace, her Swelling is gone, *Lyſander* is allowed to ſee her, the chief of her Diſtemper is Weakneſs, and in a Months time ſhe's happily reſtored to her former Health. Every thing now was got ready for the Nuptials, when the Day before they were to be Celebrated, *Lyſander*, juſt as he was entring a Hoſiers Shop, ſaw an Ancient Gentlewoman that came out of it, ſtep into a Coach: He remember'd, that he had ſeen her Face, but could not preſently think where, till recollecting himſelf he call'd to mind, that it was the careful old Lady, that with ſo much Oratory and Affection, had diſſwaded him from diſturbing his Miſtreſs, when ſhe was at the worſt. Do you know, ſaid he, that Gentlewoman, looking upon the Maſter of the Shop? Who ſmiling, anſwer'd, yes Sir, ſhe is a Midwife, well approved of for her Skill, but more particularly noted for her Faithfulneſs and Diſcretion on all Occaſions, where Secrecy is required. At the ſound of Midwife, *Lyſander* turn'd pale, and before the Hoſier had quite pronounc'd the word Secrecy, look'd like a Man that was Thunder-ſtruck: He ask'd no more Queſtions, but without ſo much as thinking on what he came for, left the Shop, and immediately went to a Phyſician that was his Intimate Friend, and having communicated to him whatever he knew concerning his Miſtreſs's Diſtemper, as well as her Cure, upon his Advice broke off the Match.

I took a great deal of delight to ſee the different working this Relation had upon the two Couſins, and when I had made an end, I found *Chloe* in the gayeſt Humour imaginable, continnally repeating Tympany and Midwife; but *Celia* in almoſt as much Amazement as we may ſuppoſe *Lyſander* to have been at the Hoſiers; till at length her Paſſion prevailing over her Concern, ſhe could contain herſelf no longer, and caſting her Eyes full of Spite and Anger upon her Couſin, ask'd her, if ſhe laugh'd as much when the Maid told her where ſhe found her Garter? ——My Garter! ſaid *Chloe*, why that upon me? I laugh'd at the Lady that had the Tympany, what Couſin is it you? I know you pretende I once——pretended! reply'd *Celia*, interrupting her, I ſcorn your Words; it's well known I had a Dropſy, and what of that? There was no occaſion to ſuſpect me, Couſin, unleſs my Garter had been found in a Gentleman's Bed, before I complained. At this *Chloe* enrag'd in her turn, the Converſation between the two Couſins began to be very loud, and full of quick Repartee, and at laſt became ſo violent, that I could underſtand nothing, but Garter and Gentleman's Bed of one ſide, and Tympany and Midwife of the other. *Chloe* thro' eagerneſs, forgetting the Tea ſhe had in her Hand, her Diſh ſlipt from the Saucer, and fell upon *Celia*'s White Petticoat, who not doubting but it was done to Affront her, took up her own, which I had fill'd that Moment, and flung it in her Couſins Face: Then both got up, *Chloe* to attack *Celia*, and *Celia* to avoid *Chloe*; *Celia* being on my Right, the firſt Step ſhe made threw down the boyling Tea-Kettle, Spirits and all, and miſerably ſcalded one of my Dogs that lay by me, whilſt the Furbulow of *Chloe*'s Scarf in the purſuit took hold of the Tea-Table and overthrew it. The clatter of the China, the ſcreaming of one Dog, and the barking of another, joyn'd to the loudneſs of the Combatants; and the Noiſe of my Parrot, who upon occaſions is uſed to joyn in the Chorus, made ſuch a hideous Conſort, that I was glad to quit the Room, and get up into my Cloſet, to ſet down what had happen'd.

†‡† *Mrs.* —— *that keeps a Boarding School upon the Boarders of* Wales, *is deſired next Aſſizes at her Ball, to take care of her Candles, and not ſuffer the Poor Gentlemen to lie at the Mercy of the Young Ladies, for near Two Hours in the Dark.*

†‡† *Mrs.* C—— *proteſts, that if Mr* —— *the Conn-ſellors Clerk does not bring her Garters, ſhe will never return him his Night Cap and Wig again*

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